

SENATE RECORD VOTE ANALYSIS

104th Congress
1st Session

Vote No. 312

July 20, 1995, 10:43 a.m.
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LEGISLATIVE APPROPRIATIONS/Senate Press Disclosure of Honoraria

SUBJECT: Legislative Branch Appropriations Bill for fiscal year 1996 . . . H.R. 1854. Byrd amendment No. 1802.

ACTION: AMENDMENT AGREED TO, 60-39

SYNOPSIS: As reported, H.R. 1854, the Legislative Branch Appropriations Bill for fiscal year 1995, will appropriate \$2.19 billion, which is \$200.4 million (8.4 percent) less than was appropriated in fiscal year 1995, and which is 16 percent less than the President's request. The Office of Technology Assessment (OTA) will be abolished, the General Accounting Office will be cut by 25 percent over 2 years, and Senate committee funding will be reduced by 15 percent.

The Byrd amendment would express the sense of the Senate that the Senate should consider a resolution this session to require each accredited member of any of the Senate press galleries to file an annual public report with the Secretary of the Senate disclosing the identity of his or her primary employer and of any additional sources of earned outside income, together with the amounts received from each such source. (The Senate has the following press galleries: the Senate Press Gallery; the Senate Radio and Television Correspondents Gallery; the Senate Periodical Press Gallery; and the Senate Press Photographers Gallery.)

Those favoring the amendment contended:

Journalists have a unique and often unequaled influence on the American public. There is no match for the leverage the media has over the public dissemination of information. In order to stay attuned with current events, Americans must rely on the press' interpretation of each day's occurrences. Americans' news is not only colored by the press' bias, it is also carefully filtered. The press can report or not report. Americans do not get all the news that's fit to print; they get all the news that journalists see fit to twist.

This influence belies the claims of most journalists that they are merely private citizens without any public role. Journalists make this claim whenever anyone suggests that they should disclose their honoraria, or speaking fees, so that Americans may know of any conflicts of interest they may have that color the spin they put on stories. Just as Americans were interested in hearing about Members of Congress accepting speaking fees (before Congress banned such acceptance) from groups on whom they were passing legislation,

(See other side)

YEAS (60)			NAYS (39)		NOT VOTING (1)	
Republicans (28 or 53%)	Democrats (32 or 70%)		Republicans (25 or 47%)	Democrats (14 or 30%)	Republicans (1)	Democrats (0)
Bennett	Akaka	Inouye	Abraham	Biden	Helms ⁻²	
Bond	Baucus	Johnston	Ashcroft	Bingaman		
Burns	Boxer	Kennedy	Brown	Bryan		
Campbell	Bradley	Kohl	Cochran	Dodd		
Chafee	Breaux	Lautenberg	Coverdell	Exon		
Coats	Bumpers	Leahy	D'Amato	Feinstein		
Cohen	Byrd	Mikulski	DeWine	Graham		
Craig	Conrad	Moseley-Braun	Domenici	Kerrey		
Dole	Daschle	Murray	Frist	Kerry		
Faircloth	Dorgan	Nunn	Gorton	Levin		
Grams	Feingold	Pell	Gramm	Lieberman		
Grassley	Ford	Pryor	Hatch	Moynihan		
Gregg	Glenn	Reid	Hutchison	Sarbanes		
Hatfield	Harkin	Robb	Inhofe	Simon		
Jeffords	Heflin	Rockefeller	Kassebaum			
Lott	Hollings	Wellstone	Kempthorne			
Mack			Kyl			
McConnell			Lugar			
Murkowski			McCain			
Pressler			Nickles			
Shelby			Packwood			
Simpson			Roth			
Smith			Santorum			
Snowe			Specter			
Stevens			Thompson			
Thomas						
Thurmond						
Warner						

EXPLANATION OF ABSENCE:

1—Official Buisiness
2—Necessarily Absent
3—Illness
4—Other

SYMBOLS:

AY—Announced Yea
AN—Announced Nay
PY—Paired Yea
PN—Paired Nay

they are now interested in hearing about journalists who accept speaking fees from groups on whom they are reporting. Though journalists may think of themselves as a find, upstanding bunch who would never be improperly influenced to slant the news, the American people tend to disagree. They think that some journalists are more interested in pursuing their own policy agendas than in accurately reporting the news. They also think that some journalists are willing to sell their influence by slanting their stories to favor any special interest group willing to pay their exorbitant speaking fees (which seem to average around \$20,000 per speech).

Most Americans, if they were polled, would probably think it was a good idea to ban journalists from accepting honoraria. The Byrd amendment would not go so far as to legislate such a ban. It would not even apply to all journalists, and it would not even require those journalists to whom it applied to disclose their honoraria. Instead, all it would do is express the sense of the Senate that the Senate should consider a resolution this session on making Senate press reporters disclose their honoraria. Basically, the amendment would put the Senate on record as believing it should take a close look at this issue this year. The amendment is reasonable; we urge Senators to give it their support.

While favoring the amendment, some Senators expressed the following reservations:

We support this amendment as a beginning, not an end. While it is true that the press has some power to shape public policy, and while it is true that some press members acceptance of high speaking fees gives the appearance that their influence is for sale, we are not certain that requiring members of the press gallery to report their outside income is appropriate. We are willing to study the issue, and are therefore willing to support the Byrd amendment.

No arguments were expressed in opposition to the amendment.